

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted simultaneously with filing of the above identified application.

With the present Amendment applicant has amended the claims to provide four independent claims 1, 4, 5, and 6, in accordance with the Examiner's comments in the Office Action. Claim 1, 4, 5, 6 now define several embodiments of the present invention.

Claims 7, 8, 9, 10 are substantially identical and depend on the corresponding independent claims.

The Examiner rejected the claims under 35 U.S.C. 102 over the patent to Merkel '301 in view the patent to Teidas '897.

With the present Amendment it is respectfully requested to convert this application into a continuation-in-part application which is a continuation of the prior art application serial no. 284,399 issued as U.S. patent no. 6,505,377. The patent document DE '301 to Merkel is a priority application to the U.S. patent application serial no. 284,399. It is therefore

believed that the Merkel reference '301 can not be considered any longer as a valid reference against the present application.

The patent to Teindas applied by the Examiner does not teach the new features of the present invention which are now defined in claims 1, 4, 5, 6.

It is therefore believed that the independent claims should now be considered as being in allowable condition.

As for the dependent claims, they depend upon the independent claims and the should be allowable as well.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application is most respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner require or consider it advisable that the specification, claims and/or drawings be further amended or corrected in formal respects in order to place this case in condition for final allowance, then it is respectfully requested that such amendments or corrections be carried out by Examiner's Amendment, and the case be passed to issue.

Alternatively, should the Examiner feel that a personal discussion might be helpful in advancing this case to allowance, he is invited to telephone the undersigned (at 631-549-4700).

Respectfully submitted,



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